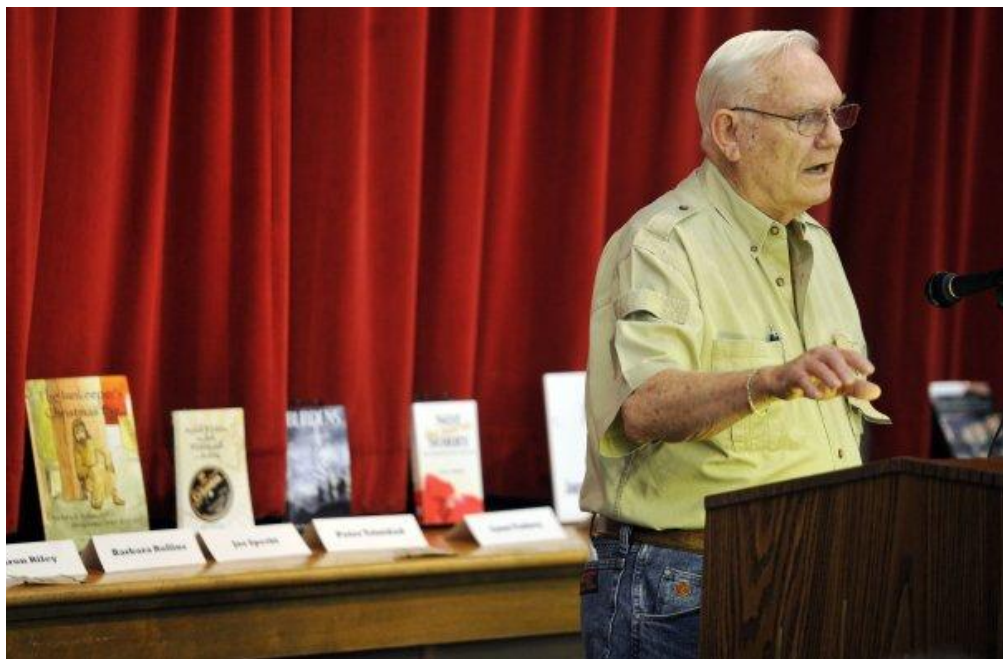


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BOOKS

A celebration of reading and writing



Eric J. Shelton/Reporter-News David Dodge, author of the book "The Forbes Family," talks about his book during the West Texas Book Festival Local Author Reception at the Downtown Public Library on Tuesday, September 24, 2013.

Posted: 7:06 p.m.

The first program of the 16th annual West Texas Book Festival begins at noon Monday at the downtown Abilene Public Library.

If you read this column last week, you know all about our lunch programs during the week, and we hope to see you at one or more of them. On Saturday, however, you will have almost an entire day to celebrate literacy at the Abilene Civic Center.

The day begins at 8 a.m. with registration for educators seeking

continuing education credits. The first program begins at 9 a.m., when Susan Holt Kralovansky will speak about writing books for children.

"There Was a Tall Texan Who Swallowed a Flea" and "Twelve Cowboys Ropin'" are Kralovansky's featured festival books, and she'll share her experiences — and her belief that writing books, reading books and going to schools to talk to children about books is the best job ever.

At 9:30 a.m., Abilene's own Marguerite Gray will talk about her Revolutionary Faith series. "Hold Me Close: Revolutionary Faith Book One," a historical fiction title set in pre-revolutionary Charles Town, South Carolina, takes readers into the lives of immigrants, ordinary citizens and prominent historical figures at a time in which decisions are made that will change the world.

Gray's second book in the series is set to be released this fall, with the third novel in progress.

At 10 a.m., the 2016 A.C. Greene Award winner and New York Times best-selling novelist Leila Meacham will speak. Meacham is no stranger to the festival, having been a featured author a couple of years ago.

After retiring from teaching, Meacham wrote what would become her first best-selling novel, "Roses," which was followed by several other books, all set in Texas. Her most recent book is "Titans," released earlier this year.

The festival will debut the newly released "West Texas Stories," with several contributing authors speaking about the process at 10:30 a.m.

The Boots & Books Luncheon, a not-to-be-missed event, begins at 11:45 a.m. During this event, an update on the new South Branch of the Abilene Public Library will be presented, as will the A.C. Greene

and Ricki Brown Abilene Librarian of the Year awards.

Tickets for the delicious barbecue lunch are \$25, and tickets will be available through Tuesday. For reservations, call 325-672-9696 or stop by the Texas Star Trading Co., 174 Cypress St.

After lunch, you'll have a chance to visit with and have books signed by the featured authors before you head home, full of good food, good fellowship and good books.

For more information about festival events, go to www.abilenetx.com/apl and click on the Boots & Books logo or call 325-676-6025.

Janis C. Test is information services manager at the Abilene Public Library, 202 Cedar St.

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<http://www.reporternews.com/entertainment/books/a-celebration-of-reading-and-writing-3c79c2c3-64d3-5f86-e053-0100007f1ade-393809141.html>

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